

IMPROVING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILL THROUGH PEER FEEDBACK

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ABSTRACT

The research aims at investigating the effectiveness of peer feedback technique in improve students' writing skill of the eight grade of SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu. A quasi-experimental research design was used. The sample were 20 students of VIII C as the experimental group selected by using purposive sampling technique. The instrument of data collection is a test given as pretest and posttest. The result of the data indicates that the t-counted value (4.86) is higher than the value of t-table (2.042) by applying 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom (df) is 30 ($df=16 + 16 - 2 = 30$). It means that the research hypothesis is accepted. It proves that the Peer Feedback technique can improve students' writing skill of the eight grade students of SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu.

Keywords: Improving; Writing Skill; Peer Feedback Technique.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk membuktikan bahwa penggunaan teknik umpan balik rekan sebaya dapat mengembangkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas delapan di SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu. Peneliti menerapkan desain penelitian quasi-experimental. Sampel dari penelitian ini adalah 20 siswa kelas VIII C sebagai kelas eksperimental yang dipilih menggunakan teknik purposive sampling. Dalam mengumpulkan data, peneliti memberikan pretest dan posttest. Hasil dari analisis data menunjukkan bahwa nilai t-counted (4.86) lebih tinggi daripada nilai t-table (2.042) dengan menerapkan tingkat signifikan 0.05 dengan derajat kebebasan 30 ($16+16 - 2=30$). Dapat di simpulkan bahwa hipotesa penelitian diterima. Ini membuktikan bahwa penggunaan teknik umpan balik rekan sebaya dapat mengembangkan kemampuan menulis siswa kelas delapan di SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu.

Kata kunci: Mengembangkan; Kemampuan menulis; Teknik Umpan Balik Rekan Sebaya.

INTRODUCTION

Writing as a productive skill is very important in learning because it is a way to express thoughts and ideas which cannot be expressed verbally (visual interpretation). Writing skills are needed by students. This skill is useful when the students need to communicate with other although they do not meet face to face. The students can use written text as an alternative way when they want to express their ideas and feeling in written form.

According to Heaton (1988: 135), “ the writing skills are more complex and sometimes difficult to teach, requiring mastery not only of grammatical and rhetorical devices but also of conceptual and judgemental elements”. That's way writing can be rich and can be productive experience. Writing is important and challenging activity because it is about how to take our idea and we need to transform them into written text. Writing as an productive skills is not easy because the students have to master all components in writing on one occasion. For example, the students should understand how to organize words into sentences, how to organize

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sentences into paragraph, until how to use mechanics of writing. The students should write their paragraph or sentences correctly in order to make the reader understand about the message of it. Writing also has set of rules. There are five general components or main ideas for writing stated by Heaton (1988) which are language use, mechanical skills, treatment of content, stylistic skills, and Judgement skills.

The researcher found that the Eight Grade Students of SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu get difficulty in writing. The students are difficult to write topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence. It makes the students not able to write paragraph into a good order. Based on the problem, it is important to create an appropriate technique in teaching writing for the students. It has purpose to encourage them to love writing.

The researcher recommends a technique to teaching writing which is Peer Feedback Technique. There are two words that stressed here which are 'peer' and 'feedback'. Based on Meriam-Webster's Dictionary, definition of peer is one belonging to the same societal group especially based on age, grade, or status. In this research, the students' peers were their classmate. Meanwhile, Feedback is an important component of the formative assessment process which formative assessment gives information to teachers and students about how students are doing relative to classroom learning goals (Brookhart, 2008:1).

According to Hattie and Timperley in Brookhart (2008:4), a model of feedback that distinguishes four levels which are feedback about the task, feedback about the processing of the task, feedback about self-regulation, and feedback about the students as a person. Whereas based on theory above, this research focused on feedback about the task which includes information about the depth or quality of the students' work, often against criteria that either explicit (criteria from scoring rubric).

According to Bijami (2013:91), "Peer feedback is regarded as a social activity". It means that peer feedback is group or pair work which the activity will produce the process of interaction, response, and responsibility. Peer feedback can help the

students to develop their social communication which it is appropriate with the function of language.

It is also added by Alnasser (2015) who states "Peer feedback is a technique whereby students provide comments to their colleagues regarding the quality of their work, is generally categorized as a collaborative learning technique, and is frequently employed in L2 writing classrooms". It means that peer feedback is a great activity which it will make the students think critically and know to express their ideas into other. According to Ferris (2003:165), there are several steps in the implementation of Peer Feedback which are : utilize Peer Feedback consistently, explain the benefits of Peer Feedback to students, prepare students carefully for peer response, form pairs or groups thoughtfully, provide structure for peer review sessions, monitor peer review sessions, and hold students' responsibilities for taking peer feedback opportunities seriously.

There are several reasons why peer feedback should be used. It is based on the previous study that has been conducted by some researchers. According to Bijami (2013) "Peer Feedback on writing develops students to improve their knowledge through providing opportunities to think critically, and to improve their autonomy. It provides a flexible platform to help the students writing practice". Besides, Wiliyanti (2014) argues "Peer Feedback technique has been proven to be able to improve student's writing skills in writing narrative text and students' understanding of element within writing especially in organization aspect".

Based on the statement above, the researcher concludes that Peer Feedback has an important role in writing process. It gives more benefit contribution on the process of learn writing and helps students express their ideas and feedback into other. By using Peer Feedback technique in learning process, the way of learning writing process will be more easy and enjoyable. The researcher has formulated the research question as : *Can the use of Peer Feedback technique improve writing skill of the eight grade students of SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu?*. This research was to prove that whether the use of peer feedback technique could improve students' writing skill of the eight grade of

SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu in writing descriptive paragraph or not.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted by using quasi-experimental design. The pretest was given to both groups. Only the experimental group was taught through peer feedback technique. Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007:283) present the research design as :

Experimental	O1 X O2

Control	O3 O4

Each research has population. The population of this research was the eight grade students of SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu. The researcher used purposive sampling technique as recommended by the English teacher. There are two variables namely writing skill of students is as the dependent variable and using of peer feedback technique is as the independent variable.

In collecting the data, the researcher used test. The test is divided into two; pretest and posttest. The pretest was given before the treatment in order to measure the students' writing skill. In this test, the students were instructed by the researcher to write a descriptive paragraph. The researcher gave the treatment eight times to the students. She taught writing descriptive paragraph by using peer feedback technique.

After the treatment, the researcher gave post-test to measure the students' writing skill after the treatment. The researcher used scoring system covering content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics which adapted from Jacob et al. in Weigle (2012:116).

In analyzing the data, firstly the researcher counted the individual score by using the formula $\sum = \frac{x}{N} \times 100$ by Arikunto (2006:276). After computing the individual score, the researcher computed the mean score of students by using the formula $\bar{X}_1 = \frac{\sum x_1}{n_1}$ purposed by Ary, Jacob, Sorensen, and Razavieh (2010:110). After getting the mean score of the experimental and the control group, the researcher counted the mean deviation.

The researcher computed the score of the deviation and squared deviation. Then, the researcher analyzed t-counted in order to know the significant difference between the experimental and the find out control group result.

FINDINGS

The researcher presents and discusses the results of the research which is taken from the pretest and the posttest. In order to prove whether the treatment has improved the student's writing skill, the researcher conducted pretest on different time. On the pretest section, the researcher asked the students to write a descriptive paragraph based on the topic which is provided by the researcher. She firstly gave the pretest to find out the students' prior knowledge in writing. She presented peer feedback technique in the teaching and learning process of writing to the experimental group.

After the treatment, she gave the posttest to both groups. She also compared the result of posttest of both groups. The difference between the result of pretest and posttest aims to measure how effective peer feedback technique can improve students' writing skill. After finding out the score from each student on the experimental and control group, the researcher computed the individual score by using the formula by Arikunto (2006:276) as follows:

$$\sum = \frac{x}{N} \times 100$$

According to the students' pretest score of the experimental group, the higher score is 87 and the lower score is 40. The pretest result shows that 12 students from the experimental group failed in writing descriptive paragraph test which the score is under 75 and only 4 students get the standard score which is more than 75. The researcher also counted the student's mean score of pretest in the experimental group. The pretest's mean score of the experimental group is 61.68. All of the score are based on the five score aspect which are Content (C), Organization (O), Vocabulary (V), Language Use (LU), and Mechanics (M). The result of pretest of the experimental group can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 The Students' Scores of the Experimental Group in Pretest

No	Initials	Score Aspects					Score
		C	O	V	LU	M	
1	AS	17	13	13	17	5	65
2	ADR	17	10	10	13	3	53
3	AN	26	16	15	17	5	79
4	APZ	20	16	17	19	5	77
5	ART	19	10	10	11	4	54
6	CSNS	13	7	7	10	3	40
7	DA	16	9	9	11	3	48
8	MH	21	16	13	17	4	71
9	MF	17	11	10	11	3	52
10	MQ	20	11	11	15	3	60
11	NA	20	10	13	11	4	58
12	NSS	16	11	11	11	4	53
13	NM	26	13	14	17	5	75
14	SAS	18	14	12	11	4	59
15	US	16	9	10	17	4	56
16	ZK	26	17	18	21	5	87
Total							987

After getting the students' standard score of the posttest of the experimental group, it can be found that the students high score is 99 and the low score is 65. After computing the total score, she gets the mean score is 80.31. The result of posttest of experimental group can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 The Students' Scores of the Experimental Group in Posttest

No	Initials	Score Aspects					Score
		C	O	V	LU	M	
1	AS	29	20	20	15	4	88
2	ADR	20	14	14	18	3	69
3	AN	30	18	20	25	5	98
4	APZ	30	20	20	24	5	99
5	ART	26	17	18	21	4	86
6	CSNS	21	13	13	17	3	67
7	DA	20	13	19	17	4	73
8	MH	27	17	18	22	4	88
9	MF	27	17	13	18	4	79
10	MQ	22	19	17	18	4	80
11	NA	22	14	18	17	4	75
12	NSS	23	14	14	18	4	73
13	NM	22	16	16	19	4	77
14	SAS	22	14	15	18	4	73
15	US	18	13	14	17	3	65
16	ZK	30	19	18	23	5	95
Total							1285

Based on the result of the pretest in control group, the researcher computed the students' score and gets the high score is 82 and the low score is 46. Meanwhile, she gets the mean score of pretest of the control group is 62.42. The result of pretest in control group can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3 The Students' Scores of the Control Group in Pretest

No	Initials	Score Aspects					Score
		C	O	V	LU	M	
1	AF	22	14	14	18	4	72
2	AG	21	13	13	12	3	62
3	AS	17	11	11	11	3	53
4	AZA	17	13	13	11	3	57
5	EN	17	12	11	12	3	55
6	GAK	17	13	13	17	3	63
7	HK	20	17	13	17	3	70
8	IAP	21	15	14	15	3	68
9	MRSD	17	10	10	11	3	51
10	MSS	17	13	13	17	3	63
11	NNA	20	13	13	17	3	66
12	NA	17	14	13	17	3	64
13	RC	21	17	14	18	3	73
14	SZA	17	11	11	12	3	54
15	YWS	26	17	17	18	4	82
16	M	13	10	10	11	2	46
Total							999

After getting the students' standard score of the posttest in control group, the researcher gets the students high score is (89) and the low score is (51). The mean score of the posttest in the control group is 67.87. The result of posttest in control group can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4 The Students' Scores of the Control Group in Posttest

No	Initials	Score Aspects					Score
		C	O	V	LU	M	
1	AF	27	18	18	22	4	89
2	AG	22	13	14	15	4	68
3	AS	21	14	17	17	3	72
4	AZA	21	14	14	17	3	69
5	EN	18	13	13	17	3	64
6	GAK	17	13	13	12	3	58
7	HK	20	17	13	18	3	71
8	IAP	21	16	14	17	3	71
9	MRSD	18	12	11	12	3	56
10	MSS	17	17	17	11	4	66
11	NNA	20	14	14	17	3	71
12	NA	21	18	14	21	3	77
13	RC	19	13	13	17	3	65
14	SZA	17	13	14	17	3	64
15	YWS	20	15	17	18	4	74
16	M	17	10	10	11	3	51
Total							1086

It can be seen that the scores of both groups are different. The mean score of the post test in the experimental group is 80.31 while the mean score of the posttest in the control group is 67.87. As a result, it can be said that the mean score of the posttest in the experimental group is higher than the mean score of the posttest in the control group. By seeing the result of the posttest of both groups, it can be concluded that the treatment applied in the experimental group was effective.

After getting the mean score of pretest and posttest, the researcher continued to find out the mean deviation and square deviation. The researcher got the deviation of the pretest and posttest in group. The result of deviation in the pretest and posttest of the experimental group is 298 while the control group is 87. The step should be done to find the mean deviation of each group. The mean deviation of the experimental group is 18.62 while the control group is 5.43. The researcher continued calculating the mean squared deviation score of experimental and control group which are 909.68 and 953.86.

After finding out the deviation of both groups, the researcher calculated the sum-squared deviation around the mean of the experimental and control groups. Based on the calculation, the researcher got

the sum-squared deviation of the experimental group (888.02) and the sum-squared deviation of the control group (952.02). After having the sum-squared deviation of both groups, the researcher continued to find out the significant difference of both groups. The researcher calculated the t-counted by using the formula that the researcher got the value of t_{counted} is 4.86.

Based on the criteria and after analyzing the data of the test by using t_{test} formula, the researcher found that t_{counted} was 4.86 by applying 0.05 level of significant with the degree of freedom (df) of the table is $NX + NY - 2 = 16 + 16 - 2 = 30$. The researcher found that the t_{counted} (4.86) was higher than t_{table} (2.042). Based on that analysis, it was concluded that the research was accepted. In conclusion, the use of Peer Feedback technique can improve students' writing skill of the eight grade of SMP Islam Terpadu Qurrota A'yun Palu.

DISCUSSION

In this discussion stage, the researcher explains about the findings of the research. The findings of this research are related to the use Peer Feedback technique to improve the students' ability in writing descriptive paragraph by looking at the five aspects. They are content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanic. On this research, the research also focuses on taught the students how to determine the topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentences.

Relating to the five aspect of paragraph which were written by the students, the researcher relates this recent study to the previous study discussed obviously by Mashadi (2014). In his research, he focused on content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanic. He discussed about how the Peer Feedback technique can be a good option for students to improve their ability in writing. He also assume that Peer Feedback could be a good treatment to give the students chances to develop their ideas on how to write English correctly since the students would get various responses from their pair. It is similar to this recent study. In this research, the researcher found that in the pretest the students got some problem in writing descriptive paragraph especially to

make the content of paragraph in good order. Their ability in writing descriptive paragraph has improved in the posttest after the treatment.

The result of pretest and posttest of the students can be seen by calculating their score. The post test was higher than the pretest. The percentage of the students achievement can be seen on the Table 6 bellows:

Table 6. The students's achievement after treatment

Aspects	Maximum Score (\geq)	Students	Percentage (%)
Content	21	15	93.75
Organization	13	16	100
Vocabulary	13	16	100
Language Use	17	15	93.75
Mechanics	3	16	100

The table shows the attainment of students on each aspect. It means most of students fulfill the criteria of maximum score.

In conducting this research, there were some processes which had been given by the researcher. Firstly, both of the experimental and control groups received the pre-test in order to know their prior knowledge about descriptive paragraph. After conducting the pre-test, the researcher found that the students who got score ≥ 75 as the minimum criteria of learning achievement (KKM) in the experimental group was 25% or 4 students, while in the control group was 6.25% or 1 students.

After giving the pre-test, the researcher continued giving treatment to the students in the experimental group for about eight meetings. In the first treatment, the researcher explained to the students about the social function of descriptive paragraph and the parts of paragraph regarding the topic sentence, supporting sentences and concluding sentences. The research also remind the students about the tense that use on descriptive paragraph. After given the explanation, the researcher explained to students about the steps in peer feedback technique on writing activity. Then the researcher asked the students to write a descriptive paragraph by using peer feedback technique. It started with a familiar topic which was "My Family Member".

The researcher controlled students writing process while the learning activity.

During the eight meetings on treatment, the researcher conducted four meetings to asked the student write a descriptive paragraph and four meeting as the revision steps. In this case, the students should write a descriptive paragraph with their pair on a meeting then in the next meeting the students should revise their pair descriptive paragraph by used peer feedback checklist and so on till eight meeting. The researcher gave different topic in each writing activity. She also always remind the student about the benefit and steps of peer feedback technique.

After giving the treatment, lastly the researcher gave the post-test to the both experimental and control groups in order to prove whether or not the treatment can improve the students' ability in writing the descriptive paragraph. Based on the result of the post-test, in the experimental group, there were 10 students (62.5%) in experimental group and 2 students (12.5%) in control group passed the minimum criteria of learning achievement (KKM).

By comparing the worksheet of students on pretest and posttest, the researcher found that the students got improvement in content aspect. It is appropriate with the focus of this research which. Before the treatment, some of students still wrote a descriptive paragraph based on what came to their mind and out of the topic. They also still confused to determine or put the topic sentence, supporting sentence and concluding sentence. Meanwhile, the students got improvement in conducting the paragraph by written the part of paragraph in correct order on the posttest.

The students also got improvement on organization aspect. In relation to the organization of the text the student should write a descriptive paragraph which begin with a good introduction, has clear description and using good coherences. Their result on pretest showed that 9 students (56.25%) still got poor criteria on organization. Whereas, in the post test the students made an improvement in organization aspect. Which were 16 students (100%) fulfill good criteria.

The other aspect which showed the improvement were vocabulary and language use. Both of them look like similar

but it different on some aspects. Vocabulary aspect related to how the students using effective words choice, using good attributive words to describe objects and variated words. While language used related to how the students write a descriptive paragraph without errors on tense, number, pronoun, preposition and to be. In those aspects, the researcher compare between the result of pretest and posttest. There were 8 students (50%) still had problem in vocabulary aspect based on their pretest. Their result unused effective word choice .e.g *Mypet watch Tv it laughs* ". They used "laughs" to describe her pet while in the real fact it will impossible if the pet/rabbit will laughs. While the result of posttest showed 16 students (100%) got improvement in vocabulary. Likewise the language use, the pretest result showed that 7 students (43.75%) had problem in language use. Their result got some errors of tense e.g " *My mother like cooking* " while it should be " *My mother likes cooking* ". Some of students also got error on number, E.g " *My house has a little garage, a living room, a family room, a kitchen, 5 bedroom and 2 bathroom* ". Whereas they should add -s on "bedroom and bathroom" to show the number or plural thing. Then after the treatment, the result of posttest showed only 1 student (6.25%) got low score. It means the students got improvement on language use aspects.

Then, the last aspect is mechanic. This aspect related to how the students manage the mechanic aspect. In pretest, there are some error which did by students. E.g. their sentence is " *my house is very simple but very cozy* " whereas the correct is " *My house is very simple but very cozy* ". The students did errors on capitalization. Therefore, in the posttest the students used the correct capitalization e.g " *My school is Islamic school* ."

By seeing the explanation above and the result of both groups, the researcher conclude that the use of Peer Feedback technique can improve the students' writing ability especially in writing descriptive paragraph.

CONCLUSION

The use of peer feedback technique can improve the students' writing skill. The result of data analysis presented indicates that the t_{counted} value (4.86) is higher than the result of t_{table} value (2.042), it means that there is a

significant improvement on the students' writing skil.

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